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SUBJECT: BARGHUTHI LETTER URGES WIDER REPRESENTATION AT
PLANNED SIXTH FATAH CONFERENCE, EXPANSION OF FACTION
GOVERNING COUNCILS

REF: A. JERUSALEM 553

[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 353

[1](#)1. (U) Summary. Para. 2 contains the text of a letter from jailed Fatah leader Marwan Barghuthi to President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and the Fatah Central Committee (FCC) regarding the planned Sixth Fatah Congress (discussed reftels). Associates of Barghuthi released the letter, which was signed March 17, to Palestinian press, which carried it April 17. The letter calls for inclusion of a more diverse array of Fatah members at the Congress (particularly increasing representation of youth, women and prisoners) and expansion of the Fatah Central Committee (FCC) and Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC). End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Begin text.

From my cell, I greet and address all of you male and female strugglers of Fatah, and the great and steadfast Palestinian people in the homeland and the Diaspora. I also greet the martyrs of our people first and foremost, the late leader President Yasser Arafat, all of the wounded and the prisoners. I address this brief letter to you hoping that it will contribute to the success of the Sixth Congress which has been long overdue for nearly two decades. Those two decades witnessed many Arab and international developments. Like the overwhelming majority of Fatah members, I believe that delaying the Congress was a main reason for the major setbacks and the chaos that has been prevailing within the movement. Holding the Congress therefore will be a significant event in the history of the national liberation movement. Two years ago the movement faced an unprecedented challenge, i.e. defeat in the PLC elections, the collapse of the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip, and the Hamas takeover. Holding a successful Congress in the current phase is a sacred Fatah and a patriotic mission that should not be therefore subject to personal interests or selfish, factional or tribal calculations. I hereby urge all Fatah members to exert their utmost efforts and to work diligently to accomplish this sacred mission to hold the Congress and ensure that it will succeed.

Mr. President, brothers and sisters,

While being concerned with the interests of the movement and the success of the intended Congress, I hereby lay out these recommendations and suggestions hoping that these will be taken into account when composing and endorsing the mechanism of determining membership and participation in the Sixth Congress.

First I would like to bring to your attention the following remarks:

1- Tens of thousands of new members have joined Fatah since the 5th congress in 1989 and the faction's students, social, and cultural memberships have greatly expanded. Thousands of these new members deserve to be part of the Sixth Congress since they never had the chance to do so in the past.

2- Since (1989), four congresses were supposed to have been held where thousands of members would have participated. As the 5th congress held in Tunis in 1989 included 1,200 members, the next congress would have included at least 2,000 members. This means the total members participating in the four congresses would have reached at least 15,000 members assuming natural, continuous increase in the faction. This should therefore be taken into consideration in determining the composition for the forthcoming Congress.

3- If the congresses were held regularly, there would have been four central committees and revolutionary councils elected in the past two decades in addition to several hundreds of participants in the two structures.

4- It should be noted that the Fatah's cadres inside Palestine were not able to participate in any congress since the foundation of the movement in 1965. It would have been much easier if the congresses had taken place on a regular basis.

5- Since the foundation, the congress never took place in the homeland; now it is time to hold it in Palestine for practical and symbolic reasons. It is important to remember that two PLO National Council sessions were held in Palestine in 1996 and 1998, in addition to holding two PLC and Presidential elections.

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6- The Palestinian National Authority was established and led by Fatah; this has affected the movement's structure. Many Fatah members left for jobs with the PA. We should note here that the movement has shouldered responsibilities in new sectors.

7- Holding the Congress while applying the old charter of the movement and ignoring developments of the past two decades will have tragic consequences. Therefore, it would be wise to take into account these important developments.

8- We need to look for the best formula that would guarantee the largest and widest participation for those who deserve it, no matter the total number of Congress members. I also urge you to consider holding the Congress in 3 venues (the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Diaspora) in order to allow all cadres who have the right to participate to take part in this Congress.

9- If the 3 venues suggestion is not deemed a good idea, or has already been ruled out, it would be very important to hold the Congress with at least 3,000 participants in order to meet minimum participation of the cadres. The success of the Congress would be measured on the level of participation of the largest segments and sectors of the movement.

10- It is imperative to represent all the regions and districts through elected committees, and all the members of the former committees, which led the factional work for years.

11- We should have the widest representation for the youth sector through the members of Fatah Youth leadership and cadres throughout the governorates, the homeland leadership, and the leadership of each governorate in addition to the youth leadership in the universities and institutions, etc.

12- It is essential to guarantee that Fatah women's representation in the Congress composes least 20 percent of

the total number. This participation should include different sectors.

13- All Fatah former and present PLC members should be represented at the Congress without exception.

14- We should have all Fatah representatives in the municipalities and village councils included, especially those who have popularity and play a role in managing matters in the local Palestinian society.

15- We should ensure a wide representation of professional syndicates especially doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc., in addition to Fatah representatives in the current and former unions at the national, local, and governorate levels.

16- We should have a wide participation of professors, teachers, media people, Fatah members in charitable organizations, NGOs, etc.

17- We should have all freed prisoners who spent more than 10 years in the Israeli jails represented in the Congress and also have all deportees, especially those of the Nativity Church, as members in the Congress.

18- We should represent the nearly 6,000 Fatah prisoners in Israeli jails including 200 old prisoners who have spent more than ten years inside prison so far. We will communicate in order to reach a suitable formula for this representation.

19- We should have representatives from the movement's national assembly for martyrs, sons and the other institutions which care for martyrs, families.

20- It is very important to have representatives from all the sectors mentioned above in order to unify the movement. This will facilitate the process of holding the congress.

To guarantee the widest participation in decisionmaking, it is essential to study the possibility of expanding the membership of the Fatah Central Committee (FCC) from 21 up to 31 or at least 27 members. The same would apply to the Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC), where a membership of at least 250 should be considered instead of 120 as present. Expanding the FRC is an important step to follow up and determine Fatah candidates in municipal and legislative elections and those who would be ministers in governments, etc. Women should also be represented in the FCC by no less than 20 percent of the total membership.

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Lastly, it is crucial for the FCC to hold meetings with the cadres, representatives from all sectors, and the factional offices in the districts and in the refugee camps in order to explain the duties of the preparatory committee and listen to their remarks. These meetings would also allow a more extensive and comprehensive internal dialogue.

Leader and Brother Abu Mazen,
Sisters and brother in the FCC;
Sisters and brothers in the Sixth Congress Preparatory Committee

Real and serious preparation is the main condition for the success of the Congress. The FCC, FRC and the other structures of the movement ought to work full-time to bring about a successful outcome for this event. It is also imperative to engage women, youth, unions and other structures of the movement in the preparations and soliciting their opinions while going ahead with preparations. It is important to have real preparations and go to the Congress unified, and have women, men, homeland members, and these in the Diaspora all as partners. This is an historic responsibility on all of us to bring Fatah in these troubled times to the safe seashore. Fatah is the hope of our people

in freedom, return, independence, democracy, and justice

Marwan Barghuthi
Hadarim prison

End Text.
WALLES